

"THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE."—CHRIST.

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THE LATE DUKE OF SUSSEX AND HIS RELIGIOUS OPINIONS.

SOMEWHAT more than a quarter of a century has elapsed since the death of this estimable and popular prince, at the ripe age of 71, excited the mournful interest of the nation. To many of the present generation, having their attention directed to other public men, and to events of no ordinary importance, even the name of his Royal Highness may not be very familiar. But to our fathers, contending for great principles amid discouragements of which we can hardly form a conception, the Duke of Sussex was an object of much hope and affection; and the services he rendered to the cause of national progress and freedom should not be forgotten. At the present moment, even, the brief record of those services which we propose giving must, we believe, be peculiarly acceptable.

There is a close connection between a man's religion and his life, and before we pass to the theology of his Royal Highness we must first notice his political position and the kind of social influence he wielded. Exalted rank in England will always command respect; but we are apt to forget the temptations arising out of it, and may hardly be just to such as retain a character for domestic purity and public honour amid circumstances anything but favourable to the cultivation of such virtues. We confess that the man is more interesting to us than the prince, and when we know that the Duke of Sussex throughout his whole career was a consistent and zealous promoter of science, literature, art, and philanthropy—that he was an advocate of liberty in opposition to a court and an oligarchy more inclined to despotism—that he was unflinching in maintaining the just civil rights of Jews and Roman Catholics when they were under an odious ban—we must feel that eminence of rank

only enhances the services he rendered, and that public principle was but the outcome and evidence of private worth. As Protestant nonconformists we have especial reason to venerate his memory if only for the part he took in the now almost forgotten struggle for the abolition of sacramental tests. It is almost incredible that those barbarous Acts which enjoined the commemoration of the Saviour's death, according to the rites of the Church of England, as a test of fitness for civil office, or any position of emolument in the State, continued for a period of one hundred and sixty years to disgrace the statute book of free Protestant England. For more than half that period the question of their repeal had been agitated in the House of Commons, with a result rather damaging to the modern theory that religious liberty is only safe when the Church is in alliance with the State. We wonder how many Church defenders of the last century disavowed and condemned their unjust ascendancy, and the civil disabilities of nonconformists! It was not until the year 1828 that the first inroad was made on the alliance of Church and State by the removal of the sacramental laws, and this was achieved in defiance of those who would preserve the constitution and advance Christianity by penal statutes! The principle announced by Lord John Russell in the House of Commons, when introducing the motion for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, deserves to be given, for it is as full of life and meaning as ever. It is the principle embodied in the nonconformist petitions of the period: "That every man ought to have the liberty of forming his religious opinion from the impression made on his own mind; that having formed that opinion, he ought to be at liberty to entertain it freely, to maintain it without interference, and to

worship God in his own manner, without any restriction or reservation whatever; and that any penalty or disqualification imposed upon him is of the nature of persecution, and is an offence to God and an injury to man."

It sufficiently marks the connection of the Duke of Sussex with the maintenance of this noble principle that he presided at a grand banquet at the Freemasons' Tavern in June, 1828, in commemoration of the passing of the bill during the previous month abolishing odious sacramental tests. It was an hour of jubilant triumph to non-conformists; an instalment of liberty had been gained; but other victories had to be achieved, and to give emphasis to this conviction the Duke, in consenting to be chairman, made the condition that the meeting (mainly composed of Protestant dissenters) should recognise the 'equal claims of the Roman Catholics to perfect civil equality. It was on this occasion that the late Rev. Robert Aspland, in responding on behalf of the Dissenters, pronounced a powerful speech, uttering amongst other stirring sentiments the following prophetic words:—"We hail the event we are met to celebrate, for we know and feel that it is but the harbinger of good things to come; a pledge to the country on the part of the Legislature and the Government that hereafter measures of conciliation and not of coercion shall be pursued with regard to conscience,"—the very policy to which present events bear witness. On vacating the chair at the termination of the memorable evening the Duke made his way to Mr. Aspland, to express his thanks and approbation of his speech, intimating that, whatever might be the policy of the royal family, he at least was true to Protestantism and liberty.

So much for the political sentiments of the Duke of Sussex; we come now to his theology. This, if not the product of temperament and character, is largely coloured by the moral and intellectual qualities of the individual; and knowing the life of the eminent person now before our minds, we should infer that his Christian faith was genial, liberal, and rational. Happily, we are not left to obscure inferences in the matter, for being a careful student of books, and accustomed to mark or annotate on the margin of the page every passage of an author he thought

worthy of attention, ample evidence exists that his theological opinions were the reverse of those usually called orthodox. When his large library was sold after his decease, many of his volumes, marked and written upon throughout by his own hand, came into possession of the public; and from one of these we learn conclusively his views of the Trinity, the Atonement, the Athanasian Creed, eternity of punishment, and almost every other leading theological question. Creeds in general he regarded "as human compositions, and therefore of no authority;" a man, he holds, "can have no other opinion than his own; others cannot think for him or he for them." Of a Trinitarian statement, setting forth that there are three persons in the Godhead, not three qualities or three attributes, but three distinct intelligent agents, he writes:—"This I call at once dogma, and above our comprehension; If they be intelligent agents, they must have free independent wills of their own, and what becomes then of the unity of the Deity?" When it is replied that they are often expressly mentioned together in Scripture, he answers: "I do not admit this." Respecting the Athanasian Creed he makes this emphatic confession: "I for one do conscientiously think that the less we trouble ourselves about this creed, and about creeds in general, the better for us." As to the necessity for Christians believing in three persons in one Godhead he observes: "We cannot be called upon to believe that which we do not understand, and which after all is only handed down to us by tradition." On an attempted explanation of the Athanasian Creed he comments in this way: "Really this is such a jargon of indigested thought, and such a mixture of inconsistency, that I cannot accept the explanation." Regarding the penalty of damnation he writes: "No human being has the power of damnation; it is horrible to think of such presumption." He thinks that the word "Church means nothing else than congregation," "that there is no sacerdotal virtue in consecration," and "that the true way to support the credit and authority of Scripture is to reconcile it with reason." He is sure that what is "repugnant to right reason cannot be inspired by God; that it is a vain endeavour to stop free inquiry into the grounds of religion;" and further, that

"it is monstrous to believe, or to endeavour to persuade others to believe, that any one would be damned for a mistake in judgment or opinion."

Lengthened evidence could be given of the liberal theology of the much-respected Duke of Sussex; but the few instances quoted are amply sufficient for our present purpose. Those who may wish to see a fuller statement are referred to the "Christian Reformer," December 18th; to an article in which we are mainly indebted for the substance of the present paper. We are warranted, then, in placing the good and wise Duke of Sussex in the honoured ranks of Christian Unitarians; another illustration of truth triumphing over education, fashion, and wordly influence; another proof that the honest and independent mind, when it gives free expression to its moral convictions, turns away from the irrational and inconsistent dogmas of so-called orthodoxy.

IT IS ONLY A TRIFLE.

BY MRS. FOLLEN.

"BE sure, George," said Mr. Pratt to his son as he left his counting-room, "be sure that you send that money to Mr. Reid to-day; direct it carefully, and see that all is done in proper form and order."

"Yes, sir," replied George, "I will."

George fully intended to obey his father implicitly. He was in the main desirous to do right; but he had one great fault. When it was not a great duty which he had to perform, he was apt to say and think, "Oh, that is only a trifle. Why should we lay so much stress on trifles?" He would often say to his father, or to any one who found fault with him for the neglect of a small duty, "I am sure it is only a trifle." Poor George, as we shall see, suffered severely for this fault.

"As soon as he had finished something he was about, George, according to the directions his father had previously given him, wrote the letter, carefully enclosed the money in it, otherwise nicely folded, and sealed it. All was done but the superscription. Just as he was preparing to direct it a young man of his own own age opened the door of the counting-room in great haste, and begged him to go with him that moment, for some one was then

passing whom he wanted very much to see and speak to.

"I can direct and carry the letter," said his younger brother. "I know who it is to go to, and I can do it just as well as you."

George had a slight feeling in his heart that he ought not to leave this letter to anyone to direct; but his brother again said, "I should think I could do such a trifling thing as that; I can surely direct a letter, though I cannot write one yet." Frank was the younger apprentice, and was anxious to get forward and do what George did. "Well," said George, "you may do it, but be sure you do it right. John Reid, you know, is the name," and he went with his companion.

"It is only a trifle," he said to himself, as he remembered his father's charge. "I have done all that is really important, it is of little consequence who directs and carries the letter;" so he chased away the slight cloud that hung over his mind as he left the counting-room with his friend.

These slight clouds that rise in the soul's horizon, so prophetic, so full of mercy, or of terror, as we regard or slight them! Why do we not learn their meaning? Why are they not ever messengers of love and peace to us?

The letter was directed and sent; Frank was faithful to his promise; he did as well as he could. George, when he returned, asked him if he had directed the letter to Mr. John Reid. "Yes," he said, "he had carried it to the office."

"Did you enclose that money to Mr. Reid, George?" asked his father when he next saw him. "Yes, sir," he again replied, but with a slight hesitation, which, however, he got over in a moment, for said he to himself, "I enclosed it carefully. How unimportant it is whether Frank or I directed the letter."

Weeks passed and there was no acknowledgment of the money. At last a letter arrived from Mr. Reid to Mr. Pratt requesting him if convenient to pay him.

Mr. Pratt again questioned his son, again was assured the letter with the money had certainly been sent, as it was, and he wrote to Mr. Reid accordingly. He advised Mr. Reid to inquire carefully at the post-office, as possibly it might have been taken by one of the clerks, for he was certain the letter had been sent with the money.

Mr. Reid took Mr. Pratt's advice, and made close inquiries at the post-office. There happened to be a young man there whose mother was very poor, and was a stranger in the town. This young man had obtained his place in consequence of his great intelligence and of his writing a very excellent hand. The postmaster had taken a fancy to him; but no one knew much about him. Strong suspicions fell upon him. When he was questioned about this letter, and when at last Mr. Reid accused him of the theft, his indignation was uncontrollable; he turned white with anger; he could not speak; he stammered and clenched his fists, and at last burst into tears and left the office.

All this was taken for the agony of detected guilt, and neither the postmaster nor Mr. Reid attempted to stop him, for neither of them wished to have him punished, and they hoped to recover the money by gentler means.

We will now change the scene. Let us enter this small neat cottage. There are but two rooms on the floor. One is kitchen and parlour, the other a bedroom. A sort of ladder in one corner intimates that in the small attic is also a sleeping apartment. A small table is spread for two people; it is very clean and nice, but everything you see indicates poverty. An old woman, with a sweet but sorrowful countenance, sits by the small window, looking anxiously out of it for some one who you might suppose was to share her simple meal with her, which stood nicely covered up at the fire, awaiting his arrival.

She is speaking to herself. "One treasure is yet left me in this world, my noble, beautiful, brave son. God bless him; for him I am willing to live. There he comes, how fast he runs, but how red and heated he looks. What is the matter, Harry? what has happened?" she exclaimed as he entered; "are you sick?"

"Yes, mother, and I shall never be well again. I have been accused of stealing, and Mr. Reid and the postmaster both believe it. I cannot live here any longer. I have just enlisted, I hope I shall be shot; I go the day after to-morrow. I will never be seen here again. To think that anyone should dare to accuse me of theft! Why did I not knock him down? I hate the world, I hate all mankind, I hate life, I want to die. If it were not for you,

mother, I believe I should kill myself. Oh, mother! mother! how can I live?" And the poor fellow laid his head in his mother's lap and wept bitterly.

The poor mother—she spoke not, she did not weep; she laid her hands upon her son's head, and looked up far, far, through the thin roof of her poor cottage to the everlasting heavens, where alone are peace and hope to be found. In her deep agony she called upon the Almighty for aid. She felt as if He did not hear her. She looked like a marble image of despair.

"I must prepare to go," at last her son said. "I have enlisted, and I must be ready. What will you do with yourself, mother?"

"Go with you, my child. Wherever you go, there I go too. You have done wrong, my son, in enlisting as a soldier; why not come first to me? Your innocence will yet be proved. Why were you so rash? All might have yet been well with us."

"I cannot bear it, mother; I must go."

Happily for the mother, the blow broke the weak thread of her life. She was soon seized with a fever of which she died in three days. Her son was allowed to watch her last hours, and she had the comfort of having him to close her dying eyes. He then joined the army; and met the fate he sought for, for he was one of the first who fell.

We will now return to the counting-room where our sad but true story began. Some months had passed; the father and son are there. "George," said Mr. Pratt, "I cannot but fear you made some mistake about that letter. Money is seldom stolen out of letters. Were you very particular about the name and place in your direction?"

"The truth is, sir," he replied, "that Frank directed the letter; I wrote and folded and sealed it, but just as I was going to direct it Harry Flint called me to the door to speak to some one, and I let Frank direct it; but I told him to be sure to direct it to Mr. Reid, and I know he did so, just as well as if I had seen it."

His father looked much displeased. "You did wrong, George, after my particular orders."

"Why, father, I am sure it was of no importance which of us did it. That was only a trifle, I am sure. I told him the

name, and he knows where Mr. Reid lives. I should not think you would blame me for this."

"I do blame you very much," said his father; "you should not have left this to Frank. I charged you to be careful; this was your own duty, and you should have performed it yourself."

George began to feel that it was not a trifle to leave another person to direct a letter of importance; he felt very badly at the thought of losing his father's money. Poor fellow! he had a worse pain than this to endure.

The next morning, when the letters came from the post-office, Mr. Pratt opened one from Mr. Reid, in which he told him that the missing letter had at last reached him. The letter, he said, had been misdirected; it was a mistake in the name of the place. He then related the sad story of the unhappy fate of the clerk and his poor mother. He added that he went to his house the very day that he left the town, intending to satisfy his mind upon the question of the young man's guilt, of which he began to doubt—that if he found him innocent he meant to take him back into the office, and if not, to induce him to restore the money, and try to recover his character in some other place, to which he would have helped him to remove. Unhappily he was too late; he found the house empty. "I pity the person," he said, "who misdirected that letter—he was the unconscious cause of the death of two excellent beings. For though we must blame the young man's violence, and may call him foolish and passionate, yet it was a deep hatred of even the appearance of sin and shame that made him do so mad an action as to enlist in a wicked war."

Mr. Pratt now read this letter to his son George. He covered his face to hide his shame and sorrow; his heart was ready to break with agony. He groaned aloud. He spoke not one word.

"I forbear, my son," said his father, "to reproach you. Your punishment is too heavy; from my heart I pity you. You will never forget from this bitter moment that it is no trifle to neglect a duty. None of us can ever calculate all the results of one wrong action. When duty is in question you will never again say, 'It is only a trifle.'"

WIDESPREAD DOUBT ABOUT ENDLESS MISERY.

LIKE a faithful sentinel the doctrine of endless misery to all who do not accept the orthodox faith has kept watch and ward against doubt for ages, threatening fearful things to those who do not accept the faith whole and undefiled. Now, we may reasonably expect a great change in the articles of the Christian faith, for it is everywhere conceded that this doctrine of endless misery is on its last legs, and that we shall witness the end of this fearful dogma. The probability is that ere long the ministers who have the hardihood to talk about an endless torment will be prosecuted for blasphemy in our courts of law. The following statement of the learned and orthodox Professor Stuart, who was, in years gone by, the great opponent of Dr. Channing, is worthy careful attention.

Speaking of those who believe in the salvation of all men he said:—

"Not a few persons in our community secretly belong to this class. They perceive the extravagant and obtrusive assumptions of those who deny any future punishment, and fearing to encourage them in their error, they withhold the expression of their own doubts and difficulties, guarding, at the same time, from expressing and inculcating any positive belief in the doctrine of endless punishment. Thus they live, and perhaps die, without ever making any explicit avowal of their secret doubts. And among these are not a few of the professed preachers of the gospel."

"It were easy to prefer accusations in this case of insincerity and the want of open and honest dealing, and this is sometimes done. To such accusations, indeed, there are some who would be justly subjected. But I am not persuaded that all doubters of this class are to be taxed with hypocrisy and double-dealing. There are minds of a very serious cast, and prone to reasoning and inquiry, that have in some way come into such a state that doubt on the subject of endless punishment cannot, without the greatest difficulty, be removed from them."

"They commence their doubts, it is probable, by some *à priori* reasoning on this subject. 'God is good. His tender mercy is over all the works of his hands. He has no pleasure in the death of a

sinner. He has power to prevent it. He knew before he created man and made him a free agent, that he would sin. In certain prospect of his endless misery, therefore, his benevolence would have prevented the bringing of him into existence. No father can bear to see his own children miserable without end, not even when they have been ungrateful and rebellious; and God, our Heavenly Father, loves us better than any earthly parent does or can love his children.'

"Besides, our sins are temporary and finite, and in a world filled with enticements both from without and within. It is perfectly easy for Omnipotence to limit, yea to prevent any mischief which sin can do, so that the endless punishment of the wicked is unnecessary, in order to maintain the divine government and keep it upon a solid basis. Above all, a punishment without end for the sins of a few days or hours is a proportion of misery incompatible with justice as well as mercy. And how can this be any longer necessary when Christ has made atonement for sin, and brought in everlasting redemption from its penalty?"

A THOUGHT ON LIFE.

How short this breath which we call life!
How much it has of care and strife!
The joys and griefs alternate rife.

Awhile we live in youth's glad time—
At length we pass to manhood's prime—
To age—then flee the earthly clime.

Uncertain, too, is life's brief day,
The young from hence are snatched away,
And strong men fail, their hopes decay.

Our life, begun so soon to cease,
We should not pass in selfish peace,
Seeking to find from toil release.

Work to be done will us be shown,
Our sorrows are not all our own,
Our joys are not for us alone.

We all each other's grief should share,
And strive to chase away dull care,
And make the burden less to bear.

When we our happiness reveal,
Then each the other's joy should feel,
Rejoicing at his brother's weal.

And in the fierce and lasting fight,
We must uphold, with all our might,
Against the wrong, the cause of right.

Although the foe may seem so strong,
And though the battle rageth long,
The triumph will to right belong.

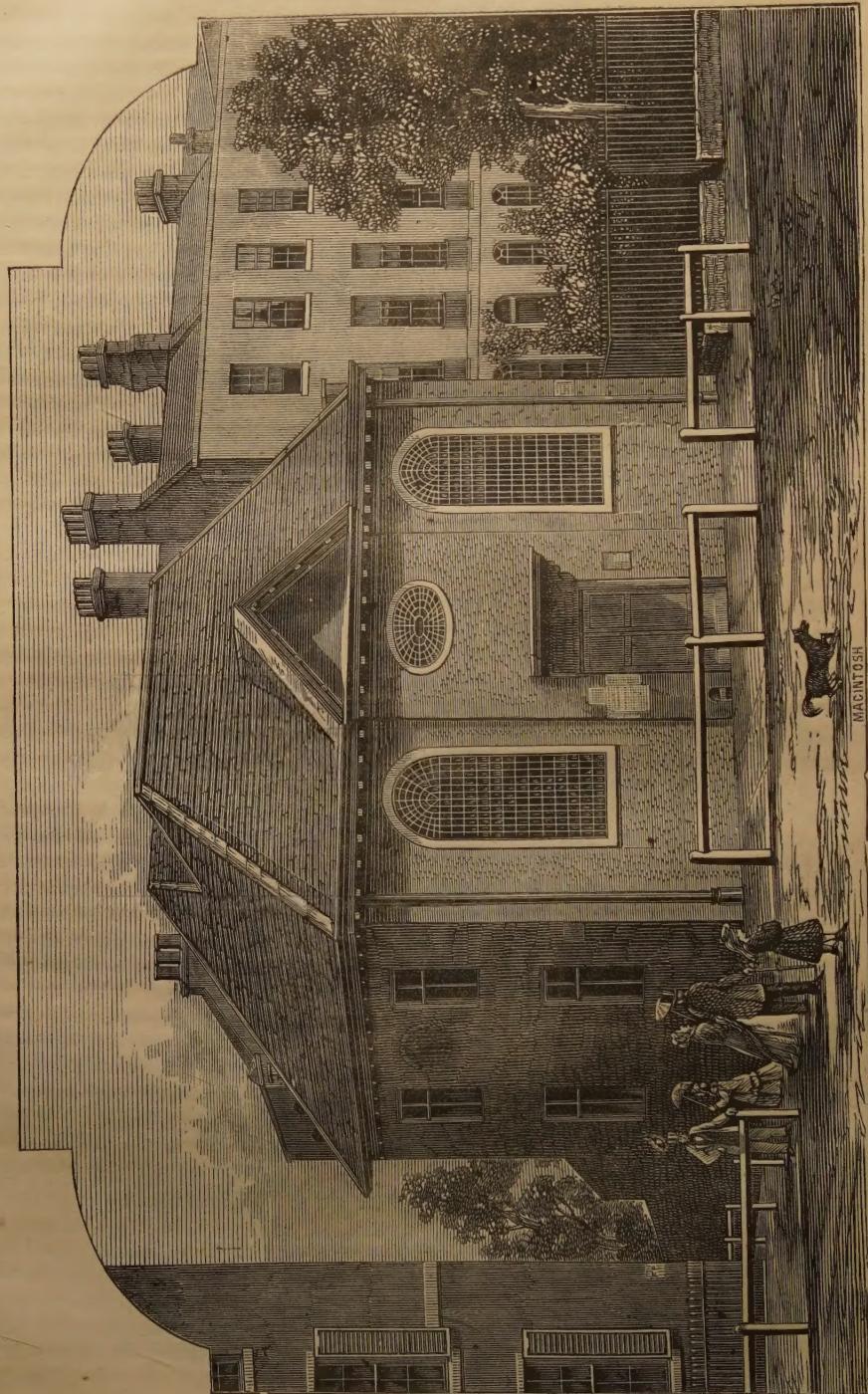
Halifax.

E. B.

ON GOING TO THE FRONT.

In all battles, whether with gunpowder or with theological arguments, it is not everybody who has courage willingly to go to the front. Many prefer a quieter and safer place in the rear; and some who by accident find themselves in the front are very desirous of changing their position. In the struggle against the errors of orthodoxy Unitarians are carrying on a battle with great odds against them; and many are those who when in company with strangers shrink from owning their opinions. But those who boldly proclaim that they are Unitarians are like soldiers who step forward to the front. Our liberal Christian friends who refuse to be called Unitarians are the soldiers who keep in the rear. They are not useless in the fight; they make our numbers appear larger. They are like the foreign regiment which, at the battle of Waterloo, Wellington wisely stationed at a safe distance, as the only way in which he could make them of use. Those of us who wish to drop the Unitarian name which they once accepted, and to retrace their steps and become Presbyterians, or nondescripts, are like soldiers stationed more forward in the battle than they like. The Broad Church party in the Established Church are men who won't run the risk of fighting; and in particular the Broad Church clergy are like the Belgian cavalry at Waterloo, who owned their own horses, and did not choose to lose their property in the battle. But the discouragements which keep many in the rear are with others motives to go forward. Every one should try to be a hero in the cause of truth. And really the difficulties which attend the theological struggle are not very serious. All that is required of us is that every one should be ready on all proper occasions to profess his Unitarianism. And let him consider that whenever among strangers he has had the courage to brave the unpopularity and say, "I am a Unitarian," he has acted like a soldier who willingly goes to the front.

CANNIBALS.—"Pa, are cannibals people that live on other folks?" "Yes, my dear." "Then, pa, Uncle George must be a cannibal, for ma says he's always living on somebody."



THE CHAPEL IN WHICH MRS. BARBAULD WORSHIPPED, NEWINGTON GREEN, LONDON.

MACINTOSH

UNITARIAN CHAPEL, NEWINGTON GREEN.

THE meeting-house on Newington Green was built in 1708 by a little colony of Presbyterian Dissenters that had some time already taken root there. The Act of Uniformity in the reign of Charles II., on Black Bartholomew's day, August 24th, 1662, now two hundred years ago, threw out of their livings at one stroke 2000 clergymen of the Church of England, and cast them abroad upon the world. Two or three of these ejected ministers, together with their friends, one after the other took up their abode in this quiet place three miles out of London to the north, and no more in those days than a few houses standing by themselves among the fields. The Conventicle Act, which passed two years after the former cruel Act, appointed fines of £5, £10, and £100 to persons meeting for any religious exercise not according to the Church of England. Thus Ministers were silenced and for a time forbidden to maintain themselves by school teaching, and congregations were prohibited from meeting together. For forty years, all over England, Dissenters lived under this severe law; but the law was not always enforced, and it is difficult to learn how far it was silently broken with impunity as the times seemed to brighten. The colony of Dissenters on Newington Green probably met together for worship for some part of this time before they ventured to build themselves a meeting-house. The chapel now standing is one of the early fruits of the toleration of Dissenters which came in after the Revolution. Until the last few years it has stood unaltered, a plain square brick building, with large round topped windows and high sloping tiled roof, firmly and well built, handsomely placed in the middle of the north side of the Green, with a row of old elms in front.

The most eminent of the Ministers here was Dr. Price, the friend of Priestley and himself a mathematician and controversial writer. He began to preach in 1758 and continued above twenty years. Of his successors Dr. Cromwell was also minister for a length of time. He embraced Unitarian opinions, after having been brought up a member of the Established Church, and filled the office of pastor here well and diligently for about twenty-three years. Among the names of the many

ministers who made a passing stay here may be noticed those of Dr. Towers, Mr. Barbauld, Dr. Thomas Rees, and others, who made themselves known beyond their weekly preaching.

Among the worshippers have been several people of note. Daniel de Foe, the celebrated writer of "Robinson Crusoe," was one of the earliest attendants at the chapel. He was born in the neighbouring village of Stoke Newington, and sent to school on the Green. At the time when the meeting-house was built he was above forty years of age, and had written his ironical work, "The Shortest Way with Dissenters." Samuel Rogers, the well-known poet, was born on Newington Green, next door to the house in which Dr. Price lived. He was an attendant at the chapel during the thirty years that he lived in his father's house, and continued trustee of the building to the end of his long life. At this time Mary Woolstonecroft, the writer, afterwards Mrs. Godwin, kept a school on the Green and attended worship. A few years later Mrs. Barbauld, writer of our hymns and children's books, sat in this chapel, a listener to her husband; a little brass-plate in one of the square old-fashioned pews that have now been re-modelled, until lately bore record: "In this pew Mrs. Barbauld used to sit." On the opposite side of the Chapel sat her sister-in-law, Mrs. Aikin, wife of Dr. Aikin, whose historical and biographical writings left a mark upon the literature of our country, but are hardly so widely known as his delightful "Evenings at Home." Mrs. Barbauld lived in Church-street, Stoke Newington, and in the house opposite lived Dr. Aikin and his family. The inscription on her tomb may be read in the churchyard of Stoke Newington Church.

The doctrine taught in Newington Green Chapel made of course only a gradual change from orthodoxy to the Unitarian opinions. The causes that brought the ejected ministers out of the Church were scruples rather political than religious. The first preachers at Newington Green were orthodox, and three of these left their ministry to conform to the Church of England. In tracing the steps of the change it is worthy of remark that Daniel Radford, the trustee who elected the Arian Dr. Price as minister, was nephew of Matthew Henry, the orthodox commentator of the Bible. After Dr.

Price's time congregation and preachers soon became Unitarian. In 1840 an organ was brought in and a Sunday school begun. Courses of lectures on Unitarian doctrine were each year given. Tablets have been put upon the walls to Dr. Price, Samuel Rogers, and to Mrs. Barbauld. The neighbourhood has been closely covered with houses, which now nearly join Newington Green to London. The present front and more modern appearance of the chapel were given it in 1860.

The following is the list of ministers for the last 150 years:—Revs. J. Russell, R. Biscoe, — Paterson, — Whitear, — Loveder, Hugh Worthington, — Lewis, J. Hoyle, Dr. Price, Thomas Amory, J. Towers, Dr. Towers, — Gillebrand, — Lindsey, Kentish, Barbauld, — Johnson, T. Rees, — Gilchrist, Dr. Phillips, J. H. Ryland, S. Wood, E. Chapman, Dr. Cromwell, W. S. Barringer, and J. K. Applebee.

RELIGION OF DISTINGUISHED MEN.

THE CREED OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.— “I believe in one God, the Creator of the universe; that he governs it by his providence; that he ought to be worshipped; that the most acceptable service we render to him is doing good to his other children; that the soul of man is immortal, and will be treated with justice in another life respecting its conduct in this. These I take to be the fundamental points in all sound religion. As to Jesus of Nazareth, I think the system of morals and his religion, as he left them to us, the best the world ever saw, but I apprehend it has received various corrupting changes, and I have, with most of the present dissenters of England (Unitarian) some doubts of his divinity.”

“I should prefer a firm religious belief to every other blessing, for it makes life a discipline of goodness, creates new hopes when all earthly hopes vanish, and throws over the decay the destruction of existence, the most gorgeous of all lights, awakens life even in death, and from corruption and decay calls up beauty and divinity, makes an instrument of torture and shame the ladder of ascent to Paradise, and, far above all combinations of earthly hopes, calls up the most delightful visions of palms and amaranths, the gardens of the blessed, the security of everlasting joys, where the sensualist and the sceptic sees only gloom, decay, and annihilation.”—SIR H. DAVY.

A SIMPLE STORY.

HIGH the summer sun had mounted
Even to his midday throne,
And the darts he scattered round him
With a golden lustre shone.
Step by step before him slowly
Crept the timid shade away,
Leaving many a treeless high-road
Naked to his scorching ray.

Bearing cheerily the burden
Of that noontide's blighting heat,
Through the dust and glare a woman
Plodded on with patient feet.
She a little daughter carried,
Holding her in close embrace,
While her eyes with fondness rested,
On her young and wistful face.
Both her arms the child around her
Twined, as ivy round an oak,
And the mother's neck submissive,
Bent beneath that loving yoke.
Weak and fragile seemed her daughter,
Like an op'ning primrose pale,
When it droops, tender petals
Nipped by some unkindly gale.

Subtle fever, slow consuming,
Long had menaced her with death,
Chasing from her cheeks the roses,
With his hot and noxious breath.
Yet, a ray of health returning
Now was gleaming in her eyes,
Causings springs of hope and gladness
In the mother's heart to rise.

Sighing, spoke the little maiden—
“Tell me, oh, my mother, pray,
Must you, to the doctor's daily,
Bear me all this weary way?”
“Till the gracious will of heaven
Gives you back your strength again.”
“Ah, but you are often tired,
Mother, though you ne'er complain.”

With a warmer clasp the mother
Pressed her darling to her breast,
Saying, “Borne for you, my loved one,
Weariness is sweet as rest.”
Still a shadow for a moment
Lingered on the daughter's brow,
Then a radiant smile appearing,
Lit her face with sudden glow.

“If a time should come,” she whispered,
“As you tell me come it may,
When I strong shall be and active,
But your strength shall pass away;
In my arms I'll fondly bear you,
And will make it my delight,
E'er to nurse you, and to tend you,
Mother, dearest, day and night.”

* * * * *
In the west, the sun declining,
Gathered up his scattered rays,
Veiling his resplendent visage,
Lightly in an evening haze.
From her bed a dying woman
Watched him with dew-moistened eye,
While her daughter, o'er her bending,
Held her thin hand tenderly.

Silent was the mother, thanking
 That her own course now was run,
 And that light would soon break on her,
 From a ne'er descending sun;
 Then came over thoughts across her,
 And she murmured, soft and low,
 "In a vision, rise before me,
 Things that happened long ago.

"Through the dust and heat of noon tide,
 Once again a child I bear,
 Softly on my shoulder pressing,
 Lies a head with golden hair,
 And a little voice is saying,
 'When your strength shall pass away,
 I will nurse you, and will tend you,
 Mother, dearest, night and day!'

"Weary years have I, my daughter,
 Helpless as an infant lain,
 Weary years have you unwearied,
 Patient soothed my every pain.
 And in dying now I bless you,
 Bless you, that you kept your word—
 Bless you, for your dear affection—
 Blessing more—than you—the Lord."

When the sun, again up rising,
 Touched the bright'ning sky with red,
 Hung the lonely daughter weeping
 O'er the calm reclining dead.
 "I am thankful, oh, my mother,"
 Cried she, 'mid her deep distress,
 "That in this, my present sorrow,
 Lurks no hidden bitterness.
 "Lo! I mourn not that you'll never
 In my arms again recline,
 Far a mightier arm around you
 Folds with tend'rer care than mine.
 Yet I found it, oh, my mother,
 Very sweet to wait on you,
 In my humble measure doing
 All that duty bade me do!"

BEATRICE A. JOURDAN.

A FACT.

In a Sunday School in the Metropolitan district the teacher had been reading with the children the account of the Fall, and afterwards questioned them, to ascertain how far they understood what they had read, a practice, we think, that ought to be followed much more than it usually is in every school. The teacher asked, "Why were Adam and Eve turned out of Paradise?" The children could not answer, but looked at each other, until one little girl held out her hand, and said, "I know, teacher; because they couldn't pay the rent!"—an answer showing that the child had a deeper knowledge of some of the miseries of human life here than of the Book of Genesis.

CZAR IVAN.

THE CZAR IVAN, who reigned over Russia about the middle of the sixteenth century, frequently went out disguised, in order to discover the opinion which the people entertained of his administration. One day, in a solitary walk near Moscow, he entered a small village, and pretending to be overcome by fatigue, he implored relief from several of the inhabitants. His dress was ragged, his appearance mean, and what ought to have excited the compassion of the villagers, and ensured his reception, was productive of refusal. Full of indignation at such inhuman treatment, he was just going to leave the place when he perceived another habitation to which he had not as yet applied for aid. It was the poorest cottage in the village. The Emperor hastened to it and knocked at the door; a peasant opened it, and asked him what he wanted.

"I am almost dying with fatigue and hunger," answered the Czar, "can you give me a lodging for one night?"

"Alas!" said the peasant, taking him by the hand, "you will have but poor fare; you are at an unlucky time. My wife is about to become a mother; but come in, come in. You will at least be sheltered from the cold, and such as we have you are welcome to."

The peasant then made the Czar enter a little room full of children. In a cradle were two infants sleeping soundly; a girl three years old was sleeping on a rug near the cradle, while her two sisters, the one five and the other seven years old, were crying and praying to heaven for their mother, who was in a room adjoining.

"Stay here," said the peasant to the Czar; "I will go and get something for your supper."

He went out, and soon returned with some black bread, eggs, and honey.

"You see all I have to give you," said the peasant—"you are welcome to partake it with my children—I must go to my wife."

"Your charity, your hospitality," said the Czar, "must bring down the blessings upon your house. I am sure heaven will reward your goodness."

"Pray to heaven, my good friend," replied the peasant—"pray to heaven that my wife may get well. That is all I wish for."

"And is that all you wish, my friend, to make you happy?"

"Happy! Judge for yourself. I have five fine children, a dear wife that loves me, a father and mother both in health; and my labour is sufficient to support them all."

"Do your father and mother live with you?"

"Yes, they are in the next room with my wife."

"But your cottage here is so very small."

"It is large enough; it can hold us all."

The peasant then went to his wife, who, an hour after, was happily past all danger. Her husband, in a transport of joy, brought the new-born child to the Czar.

"Look," said he, "what a fine, hearty child he is! May heaven preserve him, as it hath done my others!"

The Czar, sensibly affected by the scene, took the infant in his arms, and said: "I know, from the physiognomy of this child that he will be quite fortunate; he will arrive, I am certain, at great eminence."

The peasant smiled at the prediction, and at that instant the two eldest girls came to their new-born brother, and their grandmother came also to take him back. The little ones followed her; and the peasant laying himself down upon his bed of straw invited the stranger to do the same. In a moment the peasant was in a sound and peaceful sleep, but the Czar, sitting up, looked around and contemplated everything with an eye of tenderness and emotion — the sleeping children and their sleeping father. An undisturbed silence reigned in the cottage.

"What a happy calm! What delightful tranquillity!" said the Emperor. "Avarice and ambition, suspicion and remorse never enter here! How sweet is the sleep of innocence!"

In such reflections, and on such a bed, did the mighty Emperor of the Russias spend the night! The peasant awoke at the break of day, and his guest taking leave of him, said: "I must go to Moscow, my friend. I am acquainted there with a very benevolent man, to whom I shall take care to mention your kind treatment of me. I can prevail upon him to

stand godfather to your child. Promise me, therefore, that you will wait for me that I may be present at the christening. I will be back in three hours at farthest."

The peasant did not think much of this mighty promise; but in the good nature of his heart he consented however to the stranger's request.

The Czar immediately took his leave; the three hours were soon gone, and nobody appeared. The peasant, therefore, followed by his family, was preparing to carry his child to church; but as he was leaving his cottage he heard on a sudden the trampling of horses and the rattling of many vehicles. He looked out, and presently saw a multitude of horses, and a train of splendid carriages. He knew the imperial guards, and instantly called his family to come and see the Emperor go by. They all ran out in a hurry, and stood before the door. The horsemen and carriages soon formed a circular line, and at last the state coach of the Czar stopped opposite the good peasant's door. The guards kept back the crowd, which the hopes of seeing their sovereign had collected together.

The chariot door was opened, the Czar alighted, and advancing to his host thus addressed him: "I promised you a godfather; I am come to fulfil my pledge. Give me your child and follow me to church."

The peasant stood like a statue — now looking at the Emperor with the mingled emotions of astonishment and joy; now observing his magnificent robes and the costly jewels with which they were adorned, and now turning to the crowd of nobles that surrounded him. In this profusion of pomp he could not discover the poor stranger who had laid all night with him upon the straw. The Emperor for some moments silently enjoyed his perplexity, and then addressed him thus:—

"Yesterday you performed the duties of humanity, to-day I come to discharge the most faithful duty of a sovereign — of recompensing virtue. I shall not remove you from a situation to which you do so much honour, and the innocence and tranquillity of which I envy; but I will bestow upon you such things as may be useful to you. You shall have numerous flocks, rich pastures, and a house that will enable you to exercise the duties of hospitality with

pleasure. Your new-born child shall be my ward; for you may remember," continued the Emperor, smiling, "that I prophesied he would be fortunate."

The good peasant could not speak; but with tears of grateful sensibility in his eyes, he ran instantly to fetch the child, brought him to the Emperor, and laid him respectfully at his feet. This excellent sovereign was quite affected; he took the child in his arms, and carried him to the church; and, after the ceremony was over, unwilling to deprive him of his mother's care, he took him to the cottage, and ordered that he should be sent to him as soon as he could be weaned.

The Czar faithfully observed his engagement, caused the boy to be educated in his palace, provided amply for his future settlement in life, and continued ever after to heap favours upon the virtuous peasant and his family.

DOES THE CHURCH NEED REFORM ?

THIS is a question that different people will answer differently. The bishops are all of one mind that it does not. It is quite right as it is; it cannot be made better. So also say all the High Church party, the Puseyites, as they are sometimes called. And our statesmen are very much governed in such matters by the opinion of the bishops. The Broad Church party, or the liberals, say that they wish it reformed. But our statesmen and Parliament do not bring on great political struggles because a handful of gentlemen like the Dean of Westminster and the Rev. F. Maurice wish it. The question is not whether any people wish it reformed, but whether there is such a political need for it as should make statesmen undertake the task. There is a well-known couplet in Hudibras:—

We know men's opinions by their practice,
For no argument like matter of fact is.

Now this is quite to the purpose. The liberal clergy show by their conduct that there is no need whatever of reforming the Church. The Thirty-nine Articles and the Liturgy, it is true, make them grumble a little; but they protest that their consciences are not sore; and call us rude and uncharitable if we hint that they are

insincere; and we see that they keep their deaneries and livings, and would no doubt accept bishoprics if offered. In the same way the laity show by their conduct that Church reform is not needed. Out of our one thousand peers and members of Parliament not more than fifty or sixty dissent from the Church. It is true that the rest, to a man, would deny their belief in the doctrines of the Church. But they have not such tender consciences as to object to using the Liturgy and joining in the creeds and prayers. With these facts before them we cannot wonder at our statesmen letting the Church in England alone. They only meddle with it in Ireland because the Fenians made them. In short the Church in England must remain as it is until there is a very great increase of sincerity and truthfulness among us. As long as crowds of people —laymen and clergymen alike—will go to church every Sunday and repeat the Liturgy there can be, in a statesman's eyes, no great need for a reform.

But in the eyes of every right thinking man there is a great need for a reform in the Church. Its present condition taints the morality and corrupts the honesty of the whole nation. Even Unitarians, who have the courage to dissent, are not wholly uninjured by the insincerity by which we are surrounded. There is a sad fashion grown up amongst us of shutting our eyes to it, under the pretence of being liberal. When a clergyman says that he believes the Articles of the Church "in non natural sense," he is simply quibbling. And if the courts of law give him leave to quibble, and to teach, by means of the Liturgy, dogmas which he knows are not true, a healthy conscience would not give him leave to do so. Let us Unitarians call things by their right names; let us never speak of the Broad Church, and liberal party in the Church, as straightforward and wholly honest. They have lost their clear perception of the difference between truth and falsehood; and let us never make ourselves partners in their fault by justifying them. They are worse enemies to religious truth than ignorant bigots. At the present time there is plenty of intelligence about theology, but there is a sad need of more sincerity. An increase of sincerity would bring about a reform in the Church.

THE BAND OF FAITH—THE OBJECTS OF THE ORDER.

REV. GOODWIN BARNBY.

THERE are three positions which those who desire to inspire a fuller faith and a more active spirit in the religious communion with which they are associated may assume towards it. They may take the position of Erasmus, and wish to reform it from within. They may imitate the position of Luther, secede from the old organisation and establish another communion at its side; or they may occupy the position of St. Francis, establish a new order in direct connection with the ancient institute, and strive thereby to stimulate it into new life. The latter position is that which is assumed by the Band of Faith in relationship to the Unitarian Church.

The Band of Faith has one dogma, and one only, upon which it is irremovably established—the conviction of the Unity of God and of His absolute goodness—the pure and perfect monotheism which it believes was taught by Christ, and which is more or less present as the truth underlying all forms of belief. Remove from these latter the accretions of time and error, or interpret them into their true meaning, and the essential Unitarian faith is revealed to mankind. All that flows or can flow from the conviction of the Unity of God and of his absolute goodness is the profession of the Band of Faith, all else it leaves as a matter of private opinion. The belief in an only one and perfectly good God is its faith, and to promote His thorough service in all aspects of life, and to extend his sole worship in word and deed, are its members associated.

Its subsidiary objects are the personal consecration of Unitarian believers to God, the promotion of more varied forms of Unitarian worship and ritual, and the more complete organisation of Unitarian missionary work.

The personal consecration of Unitarian believers to God is the first object of the Band of Faith. Where this is really accomplished all else which is good will flow from it. Human beings are generally too weak to stand by themselves, the strongest amongst them depend more or less on external help; thought necessarily frames itself into words, something

definite is needful on which to fall back in times of emergence, the form is nothing without the spirit, but the spirit naturally expresses itself in a form, and hence the Band of Faith presents its covenant to its members as a fitting form of personal consecration to God. By that covenant, in the very spirit of the thought and life of the Holy Jesus, its members pledge themselves to do all in their power to assist in carrying on the public worship of the one and only God, and in making known to all (of course, as far as they are able) the truths and consolations of the Unitarian faith; and they ask God of his goodness to enable them to keep this vow and covenant and to live ever for His service. To have such a form of sound words in the mind must be a helpful condition. Minute and unchangeable articles of belief are detrimental to progress, but a general profession of faith has been long a want among Unitarians. No more inclusive form can be devised than that of the Band of Faith covenant. It may be added to by some but not subtracted from by any. Its faith is expressed as a foundation of works, not as in an authoritative document, to compel the consciences of others, but as a bond of agreement among voluntary associates. It is thus not a creed but a covenant, not a statute but a vow, not an authoritative symbol of belief but a pledge of voluntary association. Christened in infancy, when the spirit could take no part in the form, there comes a time when young disciples arrive at self-knowledge and discretion in which it is meet and fitting that they should publicly join the communion of worshippers and become living stones in the Church of God. It is at this time that the Band of Faith covenant presents itself as a form of Confirmation service and as a mode of introduction into Church communion. For all, of whatever age, who would really live and work out their faith, it offers itself as a form of personal consecration to God, which continues the direction of Christ—“Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.” The names of those who take the covenant of the Band of Faith are registered in its index as members of the order, and this is the first step in its organisation.

The promotion of the public worship of God by special services, by variety of reli-

gious forms of communion, and by beauty and solemnity of ritual, is the next object of the Band of Faith. Its members, personally consecrated and specially covenanted for this work, should first promote this by becoming themselves worshippers of God in spirit and in truth. By the terms of their covenant they are pledged to worship the only one God, and to worship Him alone; they can conscientiously take no part in any service of religion in which He is not the sole object of prayer and adoration. There is no doubt, however, but the various forms and modes of worship adopted by the different communions have each of them adaptations to the various ages of life and the different wants of classes of mankind, some commanding themselves more to colder and more rationalistic, and others more to the warmer and more sympathetic temperaments, and that all of these should be harmonised in a truly Catholic worship, and made to subserve the interests of the Unitarian faith. The Band of Faith would in this spirit adopt liturgies and litanies with musical responses, from the ancient communions—the Watch Night from the Moravian Brethren, the Prayer Meeting from the Methodist associations, the assembly for silent meditation and adoration from the Society of Friends, and by other special services consecrate the changes of the seasons and the wants, trials, and bereavements of life, commemorate the deeds and sufferings of the confessors and martyrs of the Unitarian faith, by spring and harvest festivals bring the flowers and fruits of nature into the sanctuary of the Spirit, and by exercising the ministering gifts of its members in the common prayer of liturgical form, and its meetings with a plurality of officiants for thanksgiving and exhortation, add to the beauty and solemnity of the Unitarian ritual, and make the Temple of God glorious within and without. The Band of Faith, in accordance with its position as an order, would not endeavour to force these varieties of worship upon established congregations, but would commend them to their use by extra week evening meetings and by special services, and every worshipper at these would be considered as much fulfilling his covenant as those engaged in conducting them.

The more complete organisation of

Unitarian missionary work is the further object of the Band of Faith. With covenanted members as a foundation, and special religious services among the members of the order as a discipline, the organisation of missionary work is a natural result. The extra week night service may be at once turned into a mission through the addition of a doctrinal lecture or devotional sermon. Two or three covenanted members in a place, constituting a local band or branch of the order, can determine upon missionary efforts in any neighbouring town or village, and, allotting the work among themselves, and obtaining what help can be furnished them from the central office and from the provincial superintendents of the order, commence by prayer and preaching to establish the Unitarian faith. If they are even so situated that extraneous help cannot be obtained, any two or three earnest souls can commence this glorious work, and at least grants of tracts are always at their disposal; and tract distribution should form an important part of their duty and element of their success. Where, indeed, a few members reside in a neighbourhood, and do not yet feel themselves strong enough for preaching operations, they cannot do better than to form themselves into a tract society in connection with the order. It is the duty of every Unitarian to be a missionary of his faith. Every member of the Band of Faith is pledged to become one, to preach by his life if not by his words, and to distribute the tract if not to deliver the sermon. To console the afflicted with the tidings of the love and mercy of the one God, and to dispel the fears and fancies of superstition from the bedside of the dying, is also a noble object for quiet missionary work. The public preaching of the Unitarian faith is the necessary complement of other missionary action. We cannot wait for it to be effected by salaried ministers alone. It is a disgrace to our zeal and activity that any parish in England should remain without an altar of worship to the one and only true God.

A HINT TO MINISTERS.—Dr. Chalmers was wont to say, a house-going minister makes a church-going people; as the people are sure to show the courtesy of returning the minister's week-day visits by their Sabbath-day attendance.

WAYSIDE GATHERINGS.

JESTING.—Take heed of jesting; many have been ruined by it. It's hard to jest, and not sometimes jeer, too; which oftentimes sinks deeper than was intended, or expected.

PLEASURE AND PAIN.—When the idea of pleasure strikes your imagination, make a just computation between the duration of the pleasure and that of the repentance that is likely to follow it.

A CHILD'S THOUGHT.—A little girl, looking up into the evening sky, said to her mother: "If the floor of heaven is so beautiful, what must its ceiling be?" The brightest thing seen is the shadow of the unseen.

MAN'S MISSION.—If a man had been created only for contemplation, it would serve as well to have him placed in some vast desert, on the top of some barren mountain; but the same power which gave him a heart to meditate gave him hands to work, and work fit for his hands.—*Bishop Hall.*

ALL NEEDED.—Says Mr. Laboulaye, the great French savant, "We must expel from the whole world slavery, violence, ignorance, and want; and we must have for this work the co-operation of the humblest of mankind." That takes us all in—you and me, and all the rest of the boys and girls.

CONVERSIONS.—Thirteen persons have applied to the municipal authorities of Vienna for permission to change their religion. Among them are ten young girls who wish to embrace the Jewish faith in order to marry Israelites. All the efforts of the Catholic clergy to dissuade them from their purpose have proved unavailing.

OPEN TO CONVICTION.—A gentleman was once arguing with a Scotch lady, when at length he stopped. "I tell you what, ma'am," said he, "I'll not argue with you any longer; you're not open to conviction." "Not open to conviction, sir!" was the indignant reply; "I scorn the imputation, sir; I am open to conviction. But," she added, after a moment's pause, "show me the man that can convince me."

SLEEPING FLOWERS.—It is said that almost all kinds of flowers sleep during the night. The marigold goes to bed with the sun, and with him rises weeping. Many plants are so sensitive that their leaves close during the passage of a cloud. The dandelion opens at five or six in the morning, and shuts at nine in the evening; the daisy opens its day's eye to meet the early beams of the morning sun. The crocus, tulip, and many others close their blossoms at different hours towards evening. The ivy-leaved lettuce opens at eight in the morning, and closes for ever at four in the afternoon. The night-flowering cereus turns night into day. It begins to expand its magnificent sweet-scented blossoms in the twilight; it is in full bloom at midnight, and closes never to open again at the dawn of day. In a clover field not a leaf opens till after sunrise. So says a celebrated author, who has devoted much time to the study of plants and often watched them in their slumbers. The plants which seem to be awake all night he styles "the bats and owls of the vegetable kingdom."

DULL SCEPTICISM.—"Our age," says Rev. Dr. Peabody, with all its scepticism, has invented nothing new in unbelief. The canon of infidelity was closed long ago, and the present doubts have an air of ambiguity. Scepticism has its source in the sluggishness of the moral nature or in an evil heart." Would it not be well for some young men whose heads have been turned by the sophisms of modern infidelity to consider these facts? Truth alone will bear inspection, and it is alone capable of legitimate expansion.

DR. LIVINGSTONE.—"At the age of ten I was put into the factory as a 'piece,' to aid by my earnings in lessening my mother's anxiety. With a part of my first week's wages I purchased Ruddiman's 'Rudiments of Latin,' and pursued the study of that language for many years afterwards with unabated ardour, at an evening school, which met between the hours of eight and ten. The dictionary part of my labours was followed up till twelve o'clock, or later, if my mother did not interfere by jumping up and snatching the books out of my hands. I had to be back in the factory by six in the morning, and continue my work, with intervals for breakfast and dinner, till eight o'clock at night. I read in this way many of the classical authors, and knew Virgil and Horace better at sixteen than I do now. Our schoolmaster—happily still alive—was supported in part by the company; he was attentive and kind, and so moderate in his charges that all who wished for education might have obtained it. Many availed themselves of the privilege, and some of my school-fellows now rank in positions far above what they appeared ever likely to come to when in the village school. If such a system were established in England it would prove a never-ending blessing to the poor. My reading while at work was carried on by placing the book on a portion of the spinning jenny, so that I could catch sentence after sentence as I passed at my work; I thus kept up a pretty constant study undisturbed by the roar of the machinery. The toil of cotton-spinning, to which I was promoted in my nineteenth year, was excessively severe on a slim loose-jointed lad, but it was well paid for, and enabled me to support myself while attending medical and Greek classes in Glasgow in winter, as also the divinity lectures of Dr. Wardlaw by working with my hands in summer."

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